W78
441

A General Epiſtle to all who have believed in the Light of the Lord Ieſus, and are called of God to follow the Lamb through the Great Tribulation.

Dear Friends,

WHom God hath called out of the world and the vanities of it to ſerve the living God in newneſs of life, and to be worſhippers of him in Spirit and truth, and to be followers of Chriſt in the regeneration, and to be baptized with him into his ſuffering and death, that ſo you may be partakers of his reſurrection and life, and manifeſt unto all that you are riſen with him out of the grave of ſin, wickedneſſe, and death, by having your hearts renewed, and your affections and minds ſet to ſeek thoſe things which are above, which are not tranſitory and viſible, but everlaſting and immortal, by which the ſouls of all the righteous and obedient children are refreſhed, and nouriſhed up unto eternal life, and through the eternal power of the Son of God, which hath been, and is manifeſt among them that believe, in the meaſure of his Spirit, and keep their firſt love and integrity unto the Lord, all his are preſerved out of the temptation of the adverſary within and without, who ſeeks to root out that which God hath planted, and to nip the bloſſom, and the bud, which God hath cauſed to ſpring forth

442 through his tender love in your hearts, ſo that you might die to the good, and be ſpoiled in that wherein all your happineſſe lieth now and for ever. Oh therefore all watch and be circumſpect, ſo much the more againſt temptations, leſt you be enſnared, and your faith fail, and you fall ſhort of the promiſe of God, in not continuing faithful to the end; friends, a care, and a tender love, and a godly jealouſie is in my heart to you, and over you all that have believed, that none of you may be loſt and ſcattered again in the deſarts and mountains, and dry and parched places, where you have ſometimes been in the time of unbelief, where the Goats who are rough can feed, that muſt go unto the left hand and have the curſe: The zeal of the Lord and his truth, which ſo glorioufly hath been manifeſt among you, above all the people and families of the earth in our generation, conſtrains me thus to write unto you, and to ſtir you up unto faithfulneſſe in this day of trial, for now Satan deſires to winnow you within, and to ſift you without, therfore all watch and pray that your faith fail not, which now will be tryed, and your hope, & your love, and your zeal to the Lord and his truth, and whether you will confeſſe him before men, his way, worſhip, and Laws, and Statutes, which he hath revealed in your hearts, which fallen men oppoſes and contradicts, and ſayers gainſay, and would not have him to rule, nor his ſervants to obey, ſo let it be manifeſt to all, you fear God rather then men, and love him, and obey him above the precepts of men which are againſt him; and whether you love the things that are above, beyond the things that are earthly; and whether you will own him, his croſs, reproach, and ſuffering, or deny it, and have the liberty of the world which is bondage, and free from righteouſneſſe;

neſſe; It's no time of reſerves, concealing, hovering or halting, for there is an utter diſcord betwixt Chriſt and *Belial*, and ſo much the more of Chriſt, his power and kingdom is brought forth, ſo much the more is the hatred, envy, and wrath of the Devil kindled, who hath deceived the Nations, and blinded their eyes, and in his ſubjects who oppoſe the Lamb of God, and tread underfoot the blood of the Covenant, ſo that to one or other each one belongs, and which is for each part will be ſeen, for there can be no concord or reconciliation, therefore all children of the day put on the armour of light, and have your feet ſhod now when we walk through thorny places, and be not fearful or doubtful, but of believing hearts ſtand not aloofe off, and idle when others are engaged in this ſpiritual War, pull not your necks out of the yoke when others draw, ſhelter not your ſelves, when you ſee others in jeopardy, love not the world when you ſee others have thrown it off; be not intangled in cumberſom things, when you ſee others throw off all weights, turn not your backs in the day of the Lords controverſie, but follow the Lamb; this is the day of tribulation we have to follow him in our age, like as all the Martyrs and Prophets had in their age, whoſe garments were made white in the blood of the Lamb; ſo all that continue and are not faint hearted, ſhall receive the Crown, the honour, the reward, and ſhall reign with Chriſt, who now ſuffers with him; therefore all dear children of God, and followers of Chriſt Jeſus, let the loyns of your minds be girded up, be now ready when the Lord calls, who is on my ſide, who will take part with me, who will own my reproach, who will engage with me, who will gather to my ſtandard of ſalvation lifted up, and to my enſign of righ-

teouſneſſe held forth in the world to redeem it, and who is ready and not abroad in the field, neither hath to go to the houſe top; but that all may ſay in their hearts, here am I ready to do thy will, ready to obey thee, and follow thee, and to ſuffer for thee, for whoſo draws back, the Lord hath no pleaſure in ſuch, he that will ſave his life ſhall loſe it, and he that will ſave his liberty will loſe it in the Spirit; and he that will ſave his earthly poſſeſſions, and for the doing thereof will deny that which God hath perſwaded him of that he ought to be faithful in, he will loſe his inheritance in the heavenly; In a word, who ſo fails in holding forth that teſtimony, that they know God requires, and is their duty to render unto him, will loſe the teſtimony of his Spirit they have ſometimes felt in themſelves, and will decay, and their love will wear out; Therefore whoſoever are reſigned and given up unto the Lord will be approved, and manifeſt to be on the Lords part, by obedience unto theſe things mentioned; Friends, do you not believe it a duty, that every Chriſtian ought to be exerciſed in, to meet together to wait upon him, to vvorſhip him, and to admoniſh, exhort, and ſtrengthen one another to pray together in the holy Ghoſt, and one for another, and to edifie and comfort one another; and do you not believe God dvvells not in Temples made vvith hands, neither hath any fellovvſhip vvith Idols, but is vvorſhipped any vvhere, and in every place vvhere the Saints meet in his Name; again, have you not been comforted, edified, and ſtrengthened in meeting, and have you not found the preſence of the Lord and his face, and have you not felt his great povver working in your hearts vvhen you vvere aſſembled together in his Name, working in you to the opening of your hearts, and quickning

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and enlivening your ſouls unto God, and Judgeing down the evill, and have you not felt his living mercies ſhed abroad in you and the ſprings of life opened, and the holy ſeed refreſhed, and Gods witneſſe reached in all, and many Convinced and Converted unto God in your aſſemblies, ſo that all have gone away comforted and refreſhed, and reſolved to continue in the grace of God, the Conſideration of theſe things, dwelling in your hearts, and the ſence of your owne preſent condition ſhould ſtir you up, and provoke you unto ſtedfaſtneſſe in the faith and practice you have received and walked in from the beginning of the manifeſtation of Gods love unto you, ſo that there ſhould me thinks need little exhortation, Gods enemies is reſolved to do wickedly, be you alſo ſo to doe your duty; they ſeeke by any means to make any fall from their principles and ſtedfaſtneſſe, doe you ſeeke to eſcape their ſnares, and to be kept cleare in your conſciences before God; Be valiant for the truth, ſell it not, but all for it, that it may be your all, and then you ſhall ſee your lot is fallen in a good place, and your poſſeſſion is pleaſant, the Lord calls now to ſuffering, put now your necks in the yoake, beare one anothers burthen and ſo fulfill the law of Chriſt, and take heed you give not eare to that voice that ſpeakes, ſave thy liberty, ſave thy eſtate, poſſeſſe thy own & provide for thy ſelf & ſpare thy ſelf, that is the voice of the enemy of your ſouls ſo keep over the world and its ſpirit, let no ſlacknеſſe appear, for that makes ſuffering long, and that gives ground to your adverſaries, that they ſhall prevaile, & that weakens the hands of others, & ſtrengthens not, this confirmes our enemies in their deceit, that we are but as other men and people, that have profeſſed God in Summer and fair weather, but will make ſhip-wrack of all in a ſtorm and in ſuffering, & any turning aſide from the holy commandement of God openeth the mouths of Gods enemies. Do not ſeek every one your own profit, eaſe, life and liberty only, but every one anothers good, and mind not only one member, but the whole body; heed not them that draw back, that is no president for you to follow, but them that preſſe forward, and is not offended in the time of hardſhip, heed not them that will tell you they can keep their hearts upright to God, and retain their love to truth and friends, and yet will not afford their preſence in your aſſemblies, but eſcapes ſuffering, and denies the Croſſe, and neglects their preſent duty, for that is deceit, and their own hearts will deceive them; put not off till to morrow, defer

fer not the time, till you can see some more ease, and some greater calm, beware of that, for then coldnesse, fearfulnesse, and slavishnesse will enter in, and you will lose your strength: Moreover, if any have begun well, and be perswaded of the truth of that they have believed, and continue not unto the end, and do not finish, such will be reckoned foolish builders, that could not finish, and all will mock them, and neither God nor men can or will believe them, but your adversaries will glory over you again when any suffers, or are brought into bonds for Christ and the Gospel sakes, seek not to get out by any indirect means, neither make any Covenant with thy adversary, vvho vvould sell both thee and all faith and hope for money, that encourages deceit, and that spirit would buy it self out of the service of God, and grow weary, give no place to that, be content every one with your present condition, till God arise and plead our cause, and make our innocency and righteousnesse appear as noon day, and make his adversaries his foot-stoole; which undoubtedly he will do, and make all know the most High ought to rule, and will rule in the kingdoms of men, and not give his glory unto another, neither suffer another to take it. Be conformable to none that goes about under pretence of love, to perswade or counsel you from your duty to God; neither submit to them that would betray you of your peace, heed not the frowns of corrupt men, nor the counsel of them who mind their own bellies, pleasure, ease, profit, and earthly things; let not natural affections and love either to lands, wife, or children blind your eyes, but love them, and receive them in the Lord, and enjoy them as though not: stand loose from all things, and out of all entanglements, and cast your care upon the Lord, who careth for the fatherless and the widow, and them that hath no helper in the earth; give no occasion or advantage to any that would turn your hearts aside from following the Lord, least their love betray you; give up all you have and enjoy to the Lord and his service, and your Souls, Bodies, and Spirits as a sacrifice unto the Lord, that he may accept you, and pour forth and continue his blessing amongst you. Never heed the threats of them that are as the Oaks of *Bashan*, nor of the great men of the earth, that mind their pleasure and lusts, who shut you up in Prison, and hale you before Judgment seats for the Worship of God, and falsely accuse you and condemn you, when God justifies you; the moth shall eat them up as a garment,

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and ſtain the glory of all fleſh that withſtand the Lord, and they ſhall melt away as Snayls, and as the fat of Lambs, and the kidnys of Rams, and God will bring the recompence of their own deeds upon their own pates, and wound the hoary ſcalp of every one that doth wickedly, who toucheth Gods anointed, and doth harm to his Prophets, and perſecutes his Children; ſurely judgment is not far from the dwellings of them who have requited the Lord thus, as to render him evil for good: and God will be avenged on ſuch a faithleſſe, mercileſſe, perfidious people as this, and of ſuch a ſpirit which rejoyceth in iniquity, and makes a mock of ſin, and hates all reproof, and would cloak over all miſchiefs with the Name of pure Laws and Authority, and Decrees of the Holy Church, yet perſecutes and gainſayes the higheſt power of God in things ſpiritual, that pertains to the conſcience: the Beaſt, and falſe Prophet, and mother of Harlots have joyned together, and flatters one another, and joynes their ſtrength together, againſt the true Church and heir of all the World, and would, under pretence of doing honour unto him, ſhut him out of the earth, and kils his ſubjects, and deſtroyes the children of the free Woman under pretence of ſuppreſſing Herreſie, and turns Judgment into Gall, Hemlock, and Wormwood, and in ſtead of relieving the oppreſſed, ads to their burthens.

Friends, dwell above all theſe things, and the Devil and his rage; the earth is the Lords, and the fulneſſe of it, we cannot be baniſhed from Gods preſence, neither ſhall they fulfil their determination, or ever be able to root out that teſtimony which is among us, for Princes ſhall be given for its Ranſome, and Kingdoms and Nations for its proſperity. The God of power ſtrengthen you all, that you may quit your ſelves like men of God, like children of the moſt high, whoſe inheritance is not here in the world, but in the Kingdom that fades not away: The Lord God of power be with you, and make you to conſider what I ſay, and to receive this my true love unto you all for the Lords ſake, who partakes with all the ſuffering members of Chriſt in their bonds, and ſhall and can rejoyce in all your comfort and joy. The peace of God dwell in your hearts, and his heavenly light ſhine upon all your tabernacles, that you may be as beautiful in the eyes of the Lord as the Roſes of *Sharon*, and bloſſom as the Lillies of the valley, and yield your fruit as the Figgtree that caſteth not his fruit. The Lord takes our part, let none doubt of that, and pleads our cauſe,

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448 let all consider that; our enemies shall see it, and be troubled at this, and time shall manifest it: therefore be of believing hearts, and trust in the Lord, so shall you never be confounded, neither be ashamed, but be as mount *Sion* that cannot be moved, and as the mountains are round about *Jerusalem*, so shall the mercies of the Lord compasse you about from this time forth and for evermore. Friends, Faith is sealed in my heart, and Love in my reins, and Gladness in my soul, and Peace in my conscience, so that none doth or can hinder my rejoycing, praised be the Lord for ever, and ever. *Amen.*

Let this be dispersed among Friends, I desire.

The Lords Servant, and yours in all true, unfained, pure love,

F. H.

THE END.